

UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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An Educational Group

MAN THINKS he directs his life; but his inner most being is irresistably drawn in the direction of his destiny.

- Goethe.

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To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.

- Amiel.

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In the performance of my art, one of the actions I commonly performed well and with ease in Ballet was a tombe movement or step, quickly regaining my balance into a continuing movement. But as the years passed on, I did not remind myself of Frances Bacon's adage - "Old age will not be defied." Dancers often believe they have a special hold on youth and of this -- I was guilty too.

Consequently, two days after our return from our summer vacation we were leaving a restaurant in the neighborhood, when I began to fall backwards down one of those sloping sidewalks to the street (put there for wheel chairs) with a mad falling cakewalk step landing about ten feet into the street, hitting a moving car. Traffic stoped and I was rushed to the emergency department at Wesley Memorial Hospital - where they found I had a badly fractured left wrist and a very damaged back (which I have to this day). Two sessions in the Hospital (16 days) having dozens of X-rays and a complete body scan which only resulted in complete confusion for my fleet of doctors. At that time, there was said to be no fracture in the back - the bone scan indicating that there might be the beginning of bone tumors due to my history of cancer. At any rate, I left the hospital with a horrible corset and am to report back after a month of rest.

All of which explains the absence of the Bulletin these many months. Typing was out of the question, let-alone the ability to think clearly about anything but my aches and pains. Classes have continued with Mr. Stone doing the bulk and Lisa Boyko teaching the children's Ballet and the Character. Phillips Kinsella took over the Yoga class for me.

Now in my third month of sitting at home - benumbed by many pain killers (our neighborhood was one of the Tylenol scare centers) and other drugs, I have occupied my time with some reading - correspondence - some sorting of material to add to our collection at the Newberry Library....and naturally, a great deal of thought about the possibility of never being able to teach or dance again. As much as I dislike what has happened to the Dance Profession during this past decade, I did love and enjoy the years that made up so much of my life...and will try to put into words my troubled feelings in the next few Bulletins.

This issue is the first of Volume 21 and the number of subscriptions (at \$5.00) - received will decide how long I continue.

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Since our semi-retirement, our social activities have increased to no end. Ditto the correspondence. Our 41st Summer Course was a brief one - very well attended and a pleasant one to teach with JUDITH SVALANDER as our charming and able assistant. MARC DARLING left the roost for another in Philadelphia, where he is mainly under the guidance of LUPE SERANO. VANNESSA MERIA has returned from Lubeck, Germany - apparently for good - and is teaching German at Berlitz. ANNA MARIE

CARLSON, another of our 'gone-German' students, seems to be there for good and is now teaching Ballet.

A phone call out of the blue from BONNIE MATHIS lead me to believe we would be seeing her this fall - but off into thin air again. A happy happening was a luncheon with LOUISE SHOTT RYAN - now a widow, and with her lovely silver grey hair, she is still as adorable as she was 40 years ago - and with the same infectious laugh. A dinner at the Cliff Dwellers to see LIZ WINEBERG before she left for Yugoslavia for a summer of dance with ANNA ROJE.

Two special occasions were luncheons with ELIZABETH WEIGAND at her apartment to meet EILEEN CROWLEY, a former Paul Taylor dancer, and the other with P. W. MANCHESTER of the Cincinnati Ballet Company. It was good to hear P.W. praise our JOHN MICHAEL SHARP in his performances with that company.

During the Summer Course on one week end, we drove up to White Lake, Michigan to be with BETSY and BROOKS DAVIS at their beautiful summer home - a really great place to relax and enjoy. The following week end, we went to Milwaukee to spend the day with Mr. Stone's family and this was a happy gathering of the clan at SHEILA GROTH's home - with dear AUDREY SWIFT joining the festivities. The next day we began gathering at SHEILA REILLY's condo to have a visit with poor MINNIE, "waiting to be picked up by her Mother and Father" (long gone). SHEILA does handle this very well but is to be recommended for Sainthood in time-to-come.

From there we went on to BILL and SHIRLEY REILLY's, where LEONARD and AVIVA SORKIN were visiting and lo and behold - JOHN NEUMEIER - home from Hamburg, Germany to visit his ailing parents. This was indeed a very pleasant gathering. The next day LEONARD treated us to a very special lecture and concert at the University. Most recently, we attended a celebration for ARTHUR LA POINTE's 80th birthday at their home with what seemed like hundreds of adoring friends with love and gifts - what else does one need?

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LANDSCAPE is a place where vegetation is nourished on high and low ground, where springs and rocks play about like children, a place that woodsmen and retiring scholars usually frequent, where birds cry aloud their joy in the scene.

-Words of an old Chinese painter.

SUMMER - 1982

Traveling by train the landscape of the USA is almost like contemplating the Universe. One is astounded by the accomplishment of the Lewis and Clark Expedition that made this same distance on foot - horseback and what ever. Traveling on Amtrak, I would venture that one has to endure as much agony as Lewis and Clark did - but they surely had better food cooked on campfires and certainly they enjoyed cleaner air and saw forget-me-not blue skies.

To accomodate more people, the compartments have been designed smaller - less, rather than more efficient. It is impossible to sit upright in the upper birth and getting into one is like crawling into an envelope. Walking from car to car is like riding the back end of a drunken camel - to reach the diner for one of their dreadful TV dinners.

The atmosphere when we left Chicago resembled Claude Monet's smokey "masterpieces" of London and Paris - beautiful on canvas but not to breath. We were half way through Wisconsin before we could begin to see the "shape of things" and by the time we arrived in North Dakota, the air was clean. When we got off the train at Minot our memory of what fresh air was like was realized. Heavy rains made the Dakotas resemble Ireland - all was so vividly green. Not until we entered the Big Blue Sky States - Montana and Wyoming - did we see sunshine light up the rolling fields of grains.- ..such luxurious expanses seemed enough to feed the world - Russia included. Soon after leaving the glorious scenery around Glacier National Park, we were again under rain clouds all the way to Portland, Oregon.

We remained in the Portland area for nine days, visiting my favorite Nephew's family - the Edward Camerons. While still young, Eddie and Lorna have acquired a nine acre lot and are starting a Nursery which they hope will take

good care of them when they are ready to retire from their Portland jobs. The three children are almost through College and about to settle into their own lives. Of all things, they have decided to grow only Bleeding Hearts and Peonies. We enjoyed our stay with this energetic family immensely and managed to take three days at one of our very favorite spots in Oregon - Seaside, Oregon - at one time a great vacation spot in the west. Oregon is a possible retirement home for us.

Our itinerary said we must leave for California - a state of few virtues and with half the mad people of the country. San Francisco was our first stop for three days, where we were housed at a quaint, old fashioned Hotel - the King George. Most of our Frisco friends were away on vacations of their own. BYRON KAYE drove up from Carmel on our first day and took us for lunch at the Cliff House in Golden Gate Park. Byron and his partner LOUISE GLENN were friends of ours in the early 30's when we taught in the Stevens Building. He later had a school in Fresno for many years but has since retired to Carmel. As a lively member of the Over 70 Club, he is as flamboyant as ever and a delight to be with.

Most of our time here was spent in the Museums in the Golden Gate Park. Here we got to see the fabulous Avery Brundage Collection of Chinese Art - the collection that Chicago let slip by to be gorgeously housed here in San Francisco. All their other exhibits were pale in comparison...it was at this sight in 1975 that we saw the great Chinese Collection "Friends of The Peoples Republic of China"...but somehow, this Brundage collection was on a smaller scale but utterly exquisite - each piece was so special.

The Golden Gate Park has always seemed to me the major attraction of this western city with its century old conifers and its great variety of deciduous trees and shrubs. The great beds of sky blue and white Agapanthas in profusion everywhere, rival anything we saw in Greece (where they are native).

The City is clean and fresh looking with its colorful houses of Italian blue, mustard shades, beige, water mellon pink, dusty grey blues, and off whites, all in the turn-of-the-century style - all three story and cuddled close together. Frisco is a city of many street corner flower stands - well dressed ladies and gentlemen -

along with the levi generation - beautiful department stores, each trying to out do the other - but always it is Gumps with the finer taste. In parting or in returning to this breezy (cool in August) city we always find ourselves eating at Lefty O'Doul's unique eating emporium.

Scenic-wise, the train trip down the coast from Frisco to Los Angeles is extraordinary. However, all this is soon to be marred by the passion and greed for oil - to add more and more pollution to our cities. The train follows the coast line and it is ravishing - stark - rugged with strangely shaped shrubbery and ground coverings. Occasionally a beach where one can get down to the water, generally unpopulated but even in the most remote spots - always those ugly pumps on land and far out into the water. The human race is out to destroy all that nature gave us to enjoy.

Shortly after Santa Barbara (where the worst of the oil rigs are) we were in Los Angeles - the No. 1 city of smog and crime. While we were there (at least for the first four days) the air was better than in Chicago - we were given a reprieve. The fifth day when we were leaving, it was "something else."

August 13. Just an idea of our last few days in Los Angeles and our frantic schedule. It was mainly to see Teresa Rudolph and her Mother that made us make this trip. Teresa is a long-time friend from the Novikoff days - the Chicago Civic Opera - and yes, "Danse Classique" - and two great visits with them in Garmisch, Germany. Late on this afternoon, she met us at the train station and deposited us at our Hotel near her home. After freshening up a bit, we spent the evening and had dinner at their lovely home. Elder Teresa presided from her bed with great dignity and royal charm.

August 14. Kevin Brown, our Godson, called for us early and drove us to one of his favorite restaurants for breakfast and get-together with long overdue conversation about him and his work. I had been with him at his Father's Memorial, but he had grown up into an important young man since Stone had last seen him. From our breakfast we brought him to meet the Rudolphs and that was a perfect meeting of minds. It was as if he were visiting Sonya - his own dear Grandmother.

That evening, Teresa entertained us at a prominent Theatrical Cafe with EDDIE NOLL,

Herself and B & I. Next to our table was MURIEL GRODEMANGE (MARINA NOVIKOVA in the Ballet Russe days). Muriel was also with us in the Novikoff days and was partnered by Stone. After our dinner we all joined them at her nearby apartment for an after-dinner drink and a rehash of those 'olden' days.

August 15. At 10 A.M. we were invited to watch a rehearsal of Teresa's champion team, RANDY GARDNER and TAI BABILONI, at the Santa Monica rink working on a new routine they were perfecting - two gorgeous artists on ice with concentration and timing seldom seen in the dance world. We were to see more of them the next day. What was interesting in another way was that it cost them \$125.00 an hour to use the ice. Teresa said not to feel sorry for them because they were paid \$6,000.00 a week - a piece.

At 2:30 P.M. Raymond and Joan Weamer picked us up and we drove to their home on Ocean View Avenue where we had drinks and a viewing of Ray's very impressive ballet Collection from over the years (Raymond also dates back to the Novikoff years at the Opera into the Page period). His collection is beyond trying to see in one short sitting and we had so much thrown at us in that short time - too much to absorb. As time went on, we began to assume that Joan Weamer has a career of her own in Ballet on the West Coast - with Ray teaching in the School System. Later they took us to a fabulous sea food cafe on the Ocean front.

August 16. We were again at the Ice rink in Santa Monica to watch the incredible "Free-For-All" demonstration on ice with dozens of teams all going at once (to each others music) and each with their own routines and coaches with that incredible split timing - never clashing.

At 2:30 P.M. we were to be at EDDIE NOLLS for a lunch with DOROTHY DORBEN (with whom I danced Dr. Eli Duffy at the Boulevard Room with Bill Reilly in August of 1946). Teresa with her handy camera was there to cement the occasion in Eddie's floral backyard.

At 5 P.M. SPIRO PASTOS picked us up and drove us to his Mountain Top bungalow, overlooking Hollywood Bowl for a bachelor's dinner and lots of memories churned over - he is now a teacher of under-privileged children in the L.A. School System - with writing as a side line.

August 17. We had our last breakfast with Kevin at our Hotel - it is a pity that we cannot live closer together. However, all things considered, he seems to be doing very well for himself - without parents - brothers - sisters or God Parents - more power to him and we hope he continues to live his own life.

At 10 A.M. Teresa picked us up for our last visit with her Mother and another Hungarian snack, then off to the train for Chicago as the dense smog lowered in.

August 19. Two days later - back in Chicago and two days later, my traumatic freak accident.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many friends who wrote such warm and appreciative notes to me after the Bulletin I dedicated to my Father - "Angus". Naturally, the older people appreciated and understood it more - but it was meant for the young - there was a lesson there for them.

- W.C.

